



PHOTOGRAPHY/ GARY McKELLAR

the Myton City

there were people living there. On community center. People have been the Ute reservation. In fact long be-gun to rent it out for weddings.

fore the 1860s, when the government The Ghost Town convenience moved the Timpanogos tribe from store is located right on the highway. the pretty valleys of the Provo River That's where the Myton museum can

Please see MYTON on C3

MYTON

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to this harsh land, there were people in the area. The Fremont Indians.

Lemon takes his class on a field trip through Nine Mile Canyon each spring. They hike to see foundations of ancient dwellings and granaries, look at pictographs on the rock and wonder together about those who came first.

Present-day Myton is a more prosaic place.

Today, Myton is a small dot on the map of U.S. 40, southwest of Roosevelt. Population: 436. The township is one square mile of city and privately owned land in the middle of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

When touring the town you see many empty lots. Yellow stubble pushes through the snow where homes and shops once stood. Some were destroyed by three large fires that devastated the town before World War I. Others were burned recently by the city, before vandals had a chance to do it.

The last grocery store closed this fall. The Tri-County Food Pantry has taken over a deserted cafe; there, Inez Kettle helps as many as 12 needy families a day get clothes and food. These are sad signs, sadder for the fact that in the early 1970s, when the energy boom was on, Myton was projected to have 1,300 residents and a thriving economy this year.

On the other hand, two trucking companies, Lamb's and Link's, and Ross Brothers Feed and Seed are still in business. So are several alternative schools, including a Headstart and the Con Amore special education school. The old American Legion hall has been refurbished as a

be found, too. They both get a good number of visitors, proving Myton isn't a ghost town yet.

By afternoon the wind stops. Dogs appear on the streets. Here a young German shepherd races happily, chased by a tiny, hairy mutt. A block east a poodle yaps and runs. To the west, a spaniel trots. You can count six dogs chained in one yard — sniffing each other and barking and wagging.

There doesn't seem to be a person outside. For the moment, the town belongs to delighted dogs. They may be celebrating the fresh snow and the sunny day. Or they may have somehow learned that Myton no longer has an animal control officer.

This was a recent decision by the City Council, Mayor Ludy Cooper explains. "We decided it at our town meeting last September. That was an amazing meeting to me. The silent majority came out — because there had been some rumor about disincorporating."

The rumor had no basis, Cooper says, but the large turnout pleased her. She felt the townspeople supported their mayor and council and she was anxious to hear what the majority wanted.

"They want our old water system back," she says. "Last year was a drought and we had to start getting our water from Strawberry Reservoir. No one likes the way it tastes.

"And no one wanted to let our contract go with the sheriff, so to save money, we voted to give up the animal control officer." The city maintenance man will have to deal with the dogs, she says.

This is her second term. "I came in during the golden years," she says. "When Texaco, Shell and Chevron were here." As a sign that times have changed, Cooper cites her proudest accomplishment lately as developing low-income housing.

Myton has 20 to 25 units — mobile

homes and houses — that have been winterized and refurbished and which young families or handicapped and elderly people are either renting or buying. No one pays more than \$36 per month.

"We are starting a lot of people toward self-sufficiency," says Cooper.

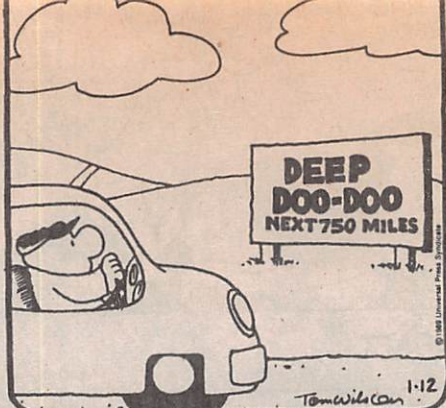
In the evening, at the City Council meeting, she and the other council members give new meaning to "self-sufficiency."

"How about cleaning up the three entrances to town," Cooper says. One of the female council members volunteers to go pick up the scraps of tin she sees on city property.

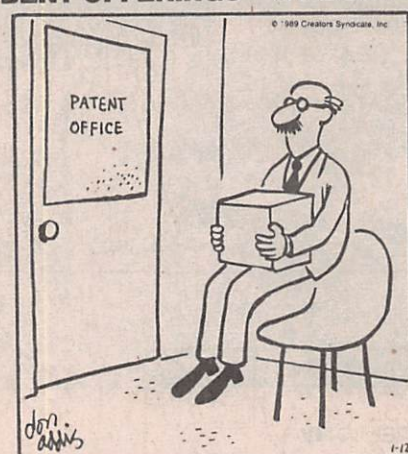
"We need to decide what to do with the '76 Ford. The city vehicle. It threw a rod."

Another council member volunteers to check the blue book on what it was worth and get an estimate on repairs.

And then another council member reminds the group she is currently training more volunteer firefighters, if anyone is interested in joining



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